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SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 05/12/08

INDEX:

(1) Trucking association-affiliated political organization found to have donated 33 million yen to lawmakers linked to the road construction lobby (Tokyo Shimbun)

(2) Okada, Maehara, Noda viewed as potential candidates to succeed DPJ President Ozawa, bringing forth policies in areas of expertise (Nikkei)

(3) Editorial: Protectionist trend in U.S. weighs on our minds (Nikkei)

(4) Editorial: Relocation talks remain stalled; Where is the solution? (Okinawa Times)

(5) Resumed Futenma talks remain deadlocked after six months; Kantei drawing criticism even from within government (Okinawa Times)

(6) Window on Okinawa column: Unusual change happening on base issues - Provocation by an unconventional consul general (Sekai)

(7) USFJ found to have purchased equipment in bulk: Measures against North Korea? (Sentaku)

(8) Old-guard congressman opposes appointment of successor to U.S. undersecretary of state (Sentaku)

(9) Interview with former Prime Minister Koizumi on "music and politics" (Asahi)

ARTICLES:

(1) Trucking association-affiliated political organization found to have donated 33 million yen to lawmakers linked to the road construction lobby

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Top play) (Full)  
May 11, 2008

It was learned that the Research Council on Road Transport and Management, a political organization affiliated with the Japan Trucking Association (JTA located in Tokyo's Shinjuku Ward), of which truck fleet operations across the country become members, had donated a total of 33.2 million yen in 2006 to 54 lawmakers belonging to the Parliamentary Council on Promotion of Trucking headed by Makoto Koga, who serves as chair of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) Election Strategy Committee, for instance, in the form of the purchase of fund-raising political party tickets.

In the same year, the research council received some 88 million yen in the form of donations from political organizations of prefectoral trucking associations and voluntary organizations. Prefectoral trucking associations have been given some 18 billion yen in subsidies for the promotion of trucking from prefectoral governments. This fact has led to the criticism that a portion of the subsidies might have been in effect flowed back to politicians.

The research council is represented by the JTA's vice chairman. According to the research council's 2006 income and expenditure reports on political funds, it donated to 52 LDP lawmakers, one

TOKYO 00001288 002 OF 012

major opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) member and also one member of the LDP's coalition partner New Komeito. Former House of Councilors member Kimitaka Fujino (failed to be re-elected in 2007), who is a former official of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (MLIT), received the largest amount of 5.7 million yen in donations.

Following him, House of Representatives member Tomoyoshi Watanabe received 1.9 million yen in donation and former House of Councilors member Shogo Arai, a former MLIT official, 1.82 million yen. Coming after them was Koga, who received 1.5 million yen.

The research council hosts a get-together party every year. Political organizations affiliated with each prefectoral trucking association buy party tickets, but in 2006, prefectoral trucking associations, for instance, the Hokkaido Trucking Association and the Hyogo Trucking Association, directly purchased party tickets worth 1.47 million yen and 4.5 million yen respectively. The Political Funds Control Law bans political donations by organizations receiving subsidies, but the purchase of party tickets is not subject to the law.

Of some 60,000 truck fleet operators across the country, 90 PERCENT are members of each prefectoral trucking association, and each trucking association pays 25 PERCENT of the subsidy each receives to the JTA. The JTA extends low interest loans to trucking fleet operators and subsidizes their mortgage interest. The post of director of the JTA has been assumed by a former MLIT official. Four posts of board directors have been assumed by former government officials hailing from, for instance, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC).

When the provisional tax rates for fuel for trucks and buses were introduced in 1976, the subsidy system for trucking associations was adopted as a measure to ease the impact of the introduction of the provisional tax rates.

Fujino said: "The amount of donations increased since the Upper House election last year. Heeding the severe situation facing the industry, I stressed the need to freeze the collection of taxes for a provisional tax rate portion. This activity might have been well received."

Donations made to lawmakers who well understand the situation of the industry

Comments by an accounting officer of the Research Council on Road Transport and Management:

We donate to lawmakers who understand our views. We have advised trucking associations not to directly purchase party tickets.

(2) Okada, Maehara, Noda viewed as potential candidates to succeed DPJ President Ozawa, bringing forth policies in areas of expertise

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)

May 12, 2008

In the Democratic Party of Japan, Vice Presidents Katsuya Okada and Seiji Maehara, and Public Relations Committee Chairman Yoshihiko Noda are viewed as potential candidates to succeed Ozawa. The three are making their presence felt more in the party recently. Many

TOKYO 00001288 003 OF 012

define Ozawa as a man who gives priority to dissolving the House of Representatives for a general election. In contrast, the three have brought forth policies in their areas of expertise. Many place expectations on them, but some insist that party members should devote themselves to toppling the Fukuda administration while avoiding an intraparty split in the party presidential election in September.

In a street speech in Kagoshima City on May 10, Okada emphasized: "I am determined to change politics in this country through a change of government." In three locations in Kagoshima Prefecture, Okada delivered speeches in support of DPJ candidates for the next House of Representatives election. Yesterday he showed up a gathering sponsored by Rengo (the Japanese Trade Union Confederation) calling for abolishing the health insurance system for people aged 75 or older. Okada has visited more than 70 electoral districts on weekends since the House of Councillors election was held last year.

Okada chairs the party's Global Warming Countermeasures Taskforce. He plans to submit the party's bill to the current Diet session. During a visit to Germany in the Golden Week holidays, he visited companies there with former Defense Minister Yuriko Koike of the Liberal Democratic Party and others. In a press conference in Kagoshima City on the night of the 10th, Okada said: "There are a few things that we can address (with the government and the ruling camp)."

Maehara resumed in April discussions at the nonpartisan parliamentary group calling itself "the group of junior lawmakers to establish a security system for the new century," which had been dormant for three years. He aims at establishing a permanent law governing the dispatch of Self-Defense Forces personnel overseas, an idea that he has long insisted on. DPJ supreme advisor Kozo Watanabe said of Maehara: "He is a politician of great promise both for the ruling and opposition parties."

In a meeting of Ryounkai, a policy group of mid-ranking and junior members of the party, Maehara stressed: "The party presidential race in September will provide the best opportunity for us to conduct policy debate." He added: "If Ozawa is elected unopposed, the DPJ will be finished."

The revised Political Funds Control Law was enacted in the earlier extraordinary Diet session. Noda acted as a coordinator in negotiations on the bill amending the law between the ruling and opposition parties. He also worked hard to coordinate views in the party to support a bill covering the active use of space, which is now set to pass the current Diet session. Noda also co-chairs the suprapartisan parliamentary group Sentaku as part of efforts to have a lot of contacts in the ruling and opposition parties.

The party leaders cannot ignore the presence of the three. On April 28, the leadership asked for the opinions of Okada and Maehara about the submission of a censure motion against Prime Minister Yasuo

Fukuda. Based on their views, the leadership decided to shelve the idea. Azuma Koshiishi and other executives who have already expressed their support for Ozawa in the presidential election assert that it is outrageous to cause disarray in the party at a time when joint efforts are needed to drive the Fukuda administration into a corner.

TOKYO 00001288 004 OF 012

Okada and the other two have the experience of taking responsibility by resigning. Given this, some members take the severe view that they are not qualified to take a course of action that would lead to dividing the party. One party member said: "The three lawmakers are not as good at planning to topple the ruling coalition as Ozawa, who has been through hell numerous times since he belonged to the LDP. They lack punch in turbulent times." Their actions in the run-up to the presidential race in September will serve as a litmus test for a post-Ozawa DPJ.

(3) Editorial: Protectionist trend in U.S. weighs on our minds

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)  
May 10, 2008

Looking at the U.S. presidential campaign, we feel as if "free trade" has become dirty words in the United States. That is because two Democratic presidential candidates are escalating criticism of free trade agreements (FTAs), as if to vie each other.

Some take the view that their bashing the FTA will only be during the campaign period. However, the words of presidential candidates in the greatest economic power in the world have a huge impact. The candidates should fairly explain the benefits of FTAs and globalization, instead of taking advantage of a domestic protectionist mood.

Candidates Obama and Clinton are competing head-to-head with each other in an election to choose the Democratic Party's presidential candidate. They ended in a one-one draw in the primaries in Indiana and North Carolina, leaving a final decision for the next set of primaries. The prolonged election campaign is another factor that gives cause for the longwinded criticism of FTAs by the two candidates.

Behind their critical stance toward FTAs echoes the widespread view in the U.S. that free trade is causing the stagnation in wage hikes and undermining employment. In particular, this tendency is pronounced among members of labor unions, the support base of the Democratic Party. Both candidates are trying to solidify their support base by taking a harsh stand toward FTAs.

Both Barrack Obama and Hillary Clinton have proposed taking a second look at the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which came into existence in 1994. Clinton has pledged to temporarily suspend new FTA talks, if she is voted into office.

On the other hand, John McCain, the Republican Party's presidential candidate, has announced a stance of firmly maintaining free trade and promoting FTAs.

Such a move in the election campaign is in tandem with the movements of U.S. Congress. The Bush administration has sought Congressional approval of an FTA with Columbia. However, the Democratic Party, which makes up a majority in Congress, has forgone a roll call.

It is true that progress in globalization, as can be seen in the growing trend of outsourcing information-communication-related jobs to India, is connected to anxiety about jobs. However, such an issue should be settled with strengthened assistance measures, such as helping people acquire new skills.

TOKYO 00001288 005 OF 012

There is concern that if the U.S. inclines toward protectionism, the

wave of support for free trade would disappear. U.S. politicians are expected to display leadership, by, for instance, explaining the benefits of expanded trade to the public.

(4) Editorial: Relocation talks remain stalled; Where is the solution?

OKINAWA TIMES (Page 5) (Full)  
May 12, 2008

The Kantei (Prime Minister's Official Residence), reacting to hard-line policy course led by the Ministry of Defense (MOD), has switched to a negotiating policy-line. The Okinawa prefectural government under the Kantei's leadership aims to relocate the (planned Futenma replacement facility) further into the sea by forcing changes to the Japan-U.S. agreement (V-shaped plan). The consultative council on the relocation of Futenma Air Station resumed talks last November after a lapse of about 10 months because the Kantei and Okinawa shared the desire to break the gridlock.

But revision talks have not made any progress over the last six months. Although the Kantei has made flexible statements in the resumed talks, Okinawa's call for moving the envisaged replacement facility further into the ocean has not made any headway. The United States' extremely inflexible attitude was Okinawa's biggest miscalculation.

U.S. Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte in meetings with Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura and Defense Minister Shigeru Ishiba on May 9 drove home the point that there would not be an easy compromise by saying, "Implementation must be in a timely fashion, as agreed on (in the relocation plan)."

U.S. Ambassador to Japan J. Thomas Schieffer, too, has applied pressure on the Kantei by telling Machimura, "Moving the planned replacement facility further into the ocean is like opening a Pandora's Box."

Negative statements by senior U.S. officials overlap with a series of statements made by U.S. Consul General for Okinawa Kevin Maher.

The Okinawa Times' April 30 morning issue carried an interview with the consul general, who said: "Coordination is over. The plan entered the implementation phase two years ago. There are only two options: either to implement or not implement this plan. Altering the plan is not an option." What made a U.S. diplomat in Okinawa take such an overbearing attitude? Many readers must have reacted sharply to his message.

What is clear is that what he said was not of a personal nature but reflected the view of the U.S. government.

We have repeatedly pointed out the problems associated with the bilateral agreement incorporated into the plan to realign U.S. forces in Japan.

First, the governments of Japan and the United States proceeded with talks without obtaining the concurrence of the prefectural government and affected municipalities in defiance of then Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto's words, "We will not push the matter forward behind the back of the affected municipalities."

TOKYO 00001288 006 OF 012

Second, as the relocation site, the two governments selected an area that was designated by the prefectural government as the habitat for dugongs, a protected species, which must be strictly preserved. The MOD's notice specifying the outline of an environmental impact assessment was filled with noticeable flaws due to the insufficient disclosure of information.

Third, the government's assertion that it would reduce the burden on Okinawa while maintaining deterrence was played up to serve its interests, regardless of the incompatible aspect of the statement. As a result, what the government says often clashes with the U.S. military's views.

Fourth, we would like to single out the problem with government subsidies based on the willingness to facilitate the realignment of US forces in Japan. This carrot-and-stick policy only undermines local administration.

Further, the two governments have yet to come up with any effective measures to eliminate the danger of Futenma Air Station.

How is Governor Hirokazu Nakaima going to address the matter? Given many problems associated with the plan to move the relocation site into the ocean, he will probably not be able to press Tokyo and Washington backed by public opinion. There seems to be no other option but to go back to the starting point to review the issues. And to do so with haste.

(5) Resumed Futenma talks remain deadlocked after six months; Kantei drawing criticism even from within government

OKINAWA TIMES (Page 2) (Full)  
May 11, 2008

In a bid to resolve the hard-going issue of relocating Futenma Air Station in Ginowan under the leadership of the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei), the government resumed talks with the prefectoral government and affected municipalities last November after a lapse of 10 months. It has been six months and yet the talks remain stalled. The reason is because the prefectoral side is calling for moving the envisioned replacement facility further into the ocean, going against the government's plan to build a V-shaped pair of runways along the coastline of Camp Schwab in Nago.

In an attempt to soften the stance of affected municipalities, the government has announced measure after measure, such as lifting the freeze on the economic package for the northern area, as part of its "sunshine policy." But they have all failed to produce positive results. The U.S. government has adamantly refused the offshore option, and the Kantei's optimistic outlook is drawing fire even from within the government.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura met U.S. Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte at the Kantei on May 9 in which the government spokesman explained on the stalled relocation talks, saying: "As long as I am chief cabinet secretary, the government will never lose its zeal regarding the U.S. force realignment."

Under the then Abe cabinet, the Ministry of Defense (MOD) pressed Okinawa for concessions by using the carrot-and-stick approach of implementing the budget for the northern area economic package and

TOKYO 00001288 007 OF 012

freezing the subsidies related to the U.S. military realignment. Machimura and Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Masahiro Futahashi have concluded that resolving the matter would be difficult under MOD's leadership. To induce concessions, the government lifted earlier this year the freeze on the base realignment subsidies.

A government official reportedly has come out with a short-cut scenario of reaching a broad agreement during the visit to Japan of President George W. Bush for the G-8 Summit in July.

The consultative council has met four times, but it has yet to find any lead to breaking the gridlock. "There is nothing more we can do," a Kantei source lamented.

U.S. Ambassador to Japan J. Thomas Schieffer drove home the point that the Japanese government should not make an easy compromise when he told Machimura: "Moving the envisioned facility into the ocean is like opening a Pandora's Box. The U.S. military will voice its dissatisfaction."

A senior MOD official commented coldly: "Although the government has come up with budgetary measures for Okinawa, nothing has moved forward. I think Mr. Machimura has finally realized the difficulty he faces in resolving this issue."

(6) Window on Okinawa column: Unusual change happening on base issues - Provocation by an unconventional consul general

By Tsuyoshi Matsumoto of the Ryukyu Shimpo

SEKAI (Pages 196-7) (Full)  
June 2008

Something unusual is happening on the base issues in Okinawa. The provocative statements on such matters as the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan by Mr. Kevin Maher, the U.S. consul general to Okinawa, are frequently rubbing the sentiments of prefectoral residents the wrong way. The presence of the unique consul general, who is not timid about making assertions about the importance of the Japan-U.S. alliance and the need for the bases on Okinawa, has brought out such expressions of alarm from heads of communities hosting bases and from academics as: "America's approach to Okinawa has changed"; "He does not listen to Okinawa's explanations, but only presses it to go along with the bilateral agreement"; and "He is like a uniformed military person."

Set off by two incidents involving U.S. servicemen, the rape of a schoolgirl in Okinawa and the robbery and murder of a taxi driver in Yokosuka City, there have been growing calls for a revision of the Japan-U.S Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). In response, Consul General Maher at his regular news conference at the beginning of April ruled such out by quipping, "Politicians and groups are turning it into a political football." Revision of the SOFA has become an all Okinawa request, with the prefecture, towns and cities, and assemblies all lined up behind it. Okinawa Governor Masahiro Nakaima has reacted sharply by saying: "He is a person who has made many incomprehensible remarks that have created friction between the United States and Okinawa." Foreign Minister Masahiko Koumura, too, in a Diet reply, created a stir by expressing his displeasure: "As a Japanese, I am not pleased."

On the relocation of Futenma Air Station, the biggest pending issue,

TOKYO 00001288 008 OF 012

Consul General Maher has continued to completely reject the possibility of revising the location of the site toward the ocean, as sought by Governor Nakaima. His relations with the conservative governor who supports the Japan-U.S. security arrangements, according to a senior official in the Okinawa prefectoral government, "has become thorny to an unprecedented degree."

The United States has consulates in Japan in Sapporo, Nagoya, Osaka-Kobe, Fukuoka, and Okinawa. These form the core of public affairs activities to boost the American image. In Okinawa, a consular section was opened first in 1952 when the prefecture was still under American rule. It was elevated to consulate general in 1956. When anti-base sentiment was smoldering, since it played a role in immediately reporting local moves to Washington and the embassy (in Tokyo), it had a position that was a level higher than other consulates.

Maher went to the University of Hawaii where he majored in modern East Asian history. After several positions, including director of international policy under the deputy assistant secretary of the Air Force at the Pentagon, and the principal officer at the consulate in Fukuoka, he became head of the security unit of the U.S. Embassy in Japan, in which capacity he was involved in the Japan-U.S. negotiations to realign the U.S. forces in Japan. He became consul general in Okinawa in July 2006. He is a specialist on Asia and security affairs. In stark contrast to his predecessors, who as much as possible avoided political statements that might irritate the sentiments of prefectoral residents, Maher has been noticeable for his frank remarks, as seen in his establishing a regular press conference. Let me give some cases in which he aroused controversy:

-- In an interview two years after the crash of a helicopter attached to MCAS Futenma on the campus of Okinawa International University, he stated: "Futenma Air Station is not particularly dangerous" (August 2006);

-- In his first meeting with Governor Nakaima after his inauguration, he clearly stated: "Closing Futenma Air Station in three years (as promised in the campaign by the governor) is impossible" (Dec. 2006);

-- At the time when two U.S. Navy minesweepers paid port calls at Yonaguni Island, over the objections of the head of that village, he was showered with criticism for calling ahead of time for a "welcome party at the home of the headsman," and for "elementary school students to join the sailors for a barbecue party," as well as for pushing the point of "the goodwill and friendship" of the occasion. (June 2007); and

-- When the Okinawa Prefectural Police reacted sharply to the names of the four maintenance crewmen not being released after the crash of a helicopter into an Okinawan university, such being needed in order to send papers of the suspects forward (to prosecutors), he stated, "What are the police investigating by asking for their names?" (August 2007).

In mid-April, this reporter visited the residence of the consul general in Ginowan City that is directly under the flight path of aircraft taking off and landing at Futenma Air Station. My interview was interrupted many times by the roar of air-refueling tankers overhead. The tall and mustached Maher, speaking in fluent Japanese,

TOKYO 00001288 009 OF 012

stressed:

"The crucial role of the consulate general in Okinawa is to explain to the prefectural residents how beneficial the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty is to the peace and stability of Japan and this region, as well as how important the bases are. China's military power is increasing, and there is also the North Korea problem. Since I participated in the USFJ realignment negotiations, there is also the role of swiftly implementing the plan, as agreed by Japan and the U.S."

He continued:

"Although there are many diplomats who think it better to be vague about the base issues, I can't understand why I should not explain things directly in order to resolve matters pragmatically, while not resorting to the form-over-substance approach used before. I do not think at all about the criticisms leveled at me. The basic principle of a diplomat is to tell the truth."

I asked, "Haven't you been taken to task by Washington or the Embassy for remarks that have brought on criticism?" He answered with a calm face: "Not even once: Ambassador Schieffer has backed my approach of positively transmitting the U.S.' stance. Even the remark about the 'political football' was supported."

This was the way that Mr. Seigen Miyazato (former professor at Dokkyo University and head of the Okinawa Research Institute of Foreign Affairs) analyzed it: "This type of consulate general did not exist in the past. As symbolized by the relocation of Futenma Air Station to a location within the prefecture, it seems that the capability of the Okinawan society to object has weakened, with the thrusting on them of various things connected to the base problem. The Japanese government, similarly, has gone on the offense, slipping into the U.S.'s policy of giving priority to the military. It is just like the strong unilateral method used by the U.S. military when it ruled Okinawa under High Commissioner Paul W. Carraway, suppressing the will of the people while brandishing the myth of autonomy. The Okinawa side is again being put to test, finding it quite difficult to be able to stop the words and action of such a consul general."

(7) USFJ found to have purchased equipment in bulk: Measures against North Korea?

SEN-TAKU (Page 44) (Full)  
May, 2008

The Defense Ministry (MOD) in April confirmed that the U.S. forces

stationed in Japan (USFJ) are purchasing such equipment as parts for small arms and bullet-proof jackets in bulk. Commenting on this, a senior MOD official said, "The U.S. has presumably obtained intelligence regarding North Korea's military activities."

It is undeniable that North Korea might take some military action in an effort to draw attention from the world in the run-up to the Lake Toya G-8 to be held in Hokkaido in July. An international military intelligence source has analyzed the move: "Since the inauguration in South Korea of the Lee Myung Bak administration, which is prepared to take a hard-line stance toward North Korea, relations between North and South Koreas are not moving as Pyongyang hopes. It is within the scope of the assumption that North Korea might trigger

TOKYO 00001288 010 OF 012

an exchange of fire."

However, it would seem convenient to the U.S. if North Korea caused a skirmish, that is to say, caused a moderate amount of trouble. Regarding the motives of the Bush administration, the same source conjectured, "The Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto), which caused a temporary suspension of the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling operations, is the de facto enemy of the U.S. The U.S. presumably intends to shake up the DPJ, which lacks a crisis management function, by turning a blind eye to a moderate skirmish on the Korean Peninsular." According to this source, the U.S. thinks that if Japan really faces an emergency situation, its public would tilt toward the government and the ruling camp.

One former cabinet minister from the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) said that DPJ President Ichiro Ozawa at one time intended to form a grand coalition because he is well aware of the awesomeness of the U.S. Others in the LDP feel the same way.

(8) Old-guard congressman opposes appointment of successor to U.S. undersecretary of state

SENTAKU (Page 10) (Full)  
May, 2008

The selection of a successor to former U.S. Undersecretary of State Karen Hughes for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, who resigned at the end of last year, is in limbo. The President has already nominated James Glassman, a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think-tank, as her successor. However, congressional deliberations needed for his assumption of office are being held up.

What are impeding the confirmation of his appointment are concerns about anti-American bias in the Voice of America's Persian broadcasts. Glassman is the chairman of the body in charge of the programs in question. Conservative old-guard congressman Coburn of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is calling on a cabinet minister in charge and the VOA authorities to give explanations on that before Glassman's appointment is approved.

(9) Interview with former Prime Minister Koizumi on "music and politics"

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)  
May 9, 2008

The Nihon Keizai Shimbun will soon publish a book titled, "Musical travels (Ongaku henreki)," written by former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi. During his term in office, then Prime Minister Koizumi went to many operas and was known as a music lover who even sang Elvis Presley songs. The Asahi Shimbun interviewed him for the first time in a while.

The book starts with an explanation about how he used to listen to music when he was a child. He speaks freely about it. "Listen to music as you please" seems to be his style.

-- When did you become a music lover?

When I was a junior high school student in Yokosuka, a teacher

encouraged me to join the orchestra that had just been formed. "I  
TOKYO 00001288 011 OF 012

will give you violin lessons," the teacher promised. "The Toy  
Symphony" was the first piece I practiced.

But Koizumi gave up the violin. While listening to a record of  
"Romance" played by Heifetz, he sensed how unskillful he was. He  
realized that he was no match for such genius and thought that he  
should be just a listener.

-- But your administration remained in power for five years and a  
half, showing that you were a genius in politics.

No, no. A genius is not an appropriate label for a politician.  
Genius' views are very different from what ordinary people think.  
Persons of common ability usually become politicians.

-- Even so, Mr. Abe was in great trouble, and Mr. Fukuda is having  
difficulty.

Even with the same musical score, it is different right from the  
first tone when different players perform. Even if different  
politicians say the same thing, their capabilities to appeal to the  
audiences are different according to sound quality, sound volume,  
intonation, and speed.

-- We hear you like concertos. But your politics seems to have been  
dissonant.

I acted harmoniously with the people.

Some might have realized that a cold rain was falling after they  
left the concert hall after having been fascinated by the Koizumi  
Symphony.

-- What do you think about the new health insurance system for  
people aged 75 or older?

I think the emotional debate will calm down over time.

-- In your book, you wrote: "Operas are like love. In them, you will  
find jealousy, hatred, and death." You also wrote: "Power is empty  
when compared to love. You need only listen to Don Carlos, composed  
by Verdi." You also wrote: "When you listen to Lohengrin, composed  
by Wagner, you will realize there are parts that people should never  
hear." What do you mean?

There is a proverb that goes, "The less said the better," but here,  
I meant to say the "less heard the better."

-- Did you learn this not from the history of music but from your  
history of love affairs?

There is sometimes both merit and truth in a lie. I wonder if it is  
desirable to eagerly wave the banner of righteousness."

Should we see the "lies" in Koizumi politics interesting or  
insincere?

Koizumi was encouraged by the musical "La Mancha." When he was  
tackling the task of reforming postal services, he was always  
humming "The Impossible Dream," the theme song of Don Quixote, the  
itinerant knight. "Although a dream hardly ever comes true and  
though there are many enemies, I will set off burying my sorrow and

TOKYO 00001288 012 OF 012

in high spirits."

-- How have you been spending your time recently?

I read books, watch television, go to concerts, and sometimes attend  
political meetings.

-- Some are calling for you to return to politics as prime minister.

Those who do not know much about me say so. The prime minister always has to fight many enemies and is always in dire distress."

-- What music do you want for your funeral?

Film music composed by Morricone might be desirable.

The book concludes: "Now that I have been released from the premier's duties, I would like to set out on a journey in search of buried or new excellent pieces of music."

DONOVAN